

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A process for producing a sodium acrylate polymer by a free-radical polymerization of sodium acrylate with or without other monomers in an aqueous medium, which comprises using sodium acrylate in ~~the~~ a form of an aqueous solution or dispersion obtainable by dissolving or dispersing solid sodium acrylate in ~~an~~ the aqueous medium.

2. (Currently amended) A The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein the aqueous solution of sodium acrylate ~~used~~ contains from 10 to 100 mol% of sodium acrylate and from 0 to 90 mol% of acrylic acid.

3. (Currently amended) A The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the aqueous solution of sodium acrylate ~~used~~ contains from 10 to 95 mol% of sodium acrylate and from 5 to 90 mol% of acrylic acid.

4. (Currently amended) A The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the aqueous solution of sodium acrylate ~~used~~ contains from 40 to 90 mol% of sodium acrylate and from 10 to 60 mol% of acrylic acid.

5. (Currently amended) A The process ~~as claimed in any of claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 4~~, wherein the aqueous solution contains from 0.01 to 5 mol% of a monomer containing at least two ethylenically unsaturated double bonds.

6. (Currently amended) A The process ~~as~~
~~elaimed in any of elaims claim 1 to 5,~~ wherein the
aqueous monomer solution is prepared using solid an-
hydrous sodium acrylate.

7. (Currently amended) A The process ~~as~~
~~elaimed in any of elaims claim 1 to 6,~~ wherein the
solid sodium acrylate ~~used~~ has a water content from
0.1% to 10% by weight.

8. (Currently amended) ~~Sodium~~ A sodium
acrylate polymer ~~obtainable~~ prepared by the process of
~~elaims claim 1 to 7.~~

9. (Currently amended) ~~The use of solid~~
~~sodium acrylate for~~ A method of producing ~~polymers by a~~
polymer from solid sodium acrylate comprising dissolv-
ing the solid sodium acrylate in water to form an aque-
ous monomer solution and polymerizing the monomer solu-
tion in the presence or absence of other monomers.

10. (Currently amended) A The process
~~according to any of elaims claim 1 to 9,~~ wherein the
solid sodium acrylate is wholly or partly replaced by
another water-soluble salt of acrylic acid.